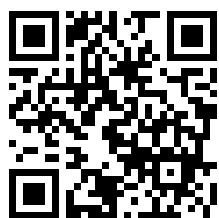


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The Author, Shri & Amrit Dev.

## *A Biographical Notice of Dante in the 1494 Edition of the 'Speculum Historiale'*

*Printed in India*

THE 'Speculum Historiale' forms, as is well known, the last division<sup>1</sup> of the 'Majus Speculum,' the vast encyclopaedic work of Vincent de Beauvais. As Vincent is generally supposed to have died about the year 1264,<sup>2</sup> it was naturally not to be expected that his 'Speculum' should contain a notice of Dante, who was not born until 1265. Great was my surprise, therefore, on turning over the pages of the first Venice edition (1494) of the 'Speculum Historiale,' to find the name of 'Dantes algerius' at the head of a paragraph consisting of a short biographical notice of the Florentine poet, and concluding with the date of his death (1321). Plainly in the edition before me the chronicle of Vincent had been continued by some later hand. Accordingly, on making a careful examination of the book, I found that ninety-two chapters had been interpolated, towards the close of Vincent's own work, the interpolation beginning in the middle of cap. cv. of lib. xxxii. (according to the division adopted in the Strassburg edition of 1473). Vincent's chapter commences as follows :

*De temporibus presentibus. Ecce tempora sexte etatis<sup>3</sup> usque ad presentem annum summatis perstringendo descripsi qui est annus christianissimi regis nostri ludowici.XVIII. imperii vero friderici.XXXIII.<sup>us</sup> Pontificatus autem innocentii quarti secundus. Qui est porro ab incarnatione domini millesimus.cc<sup>us</sup> xluij<sup>us</sup>. A creacione mundi quintimillesimus.cc<sup>us</sup> vj<sup>us</sup> Et hoc duntaxat iuxta minorem numerum quem in hac tota serie seuti sumus. Porro secundum majorem numerum ex antiqua translacione*

<sup>1</sup> A fourth part, entitled *Speculum Morale*, is included in all the printed editions of Vincent de Beauvais; but this has been conclusively shown to be a later compilation.

<sup>2</sup> According to one account he was alive as late as 1276.

<sup>3</sup> Vincent divides the history of the world into six ages :—1. From the Creation to the Flood. 2. From the Flood to Abraham. 3. From Abraham to David. 4. From David to the Capture of Jerusalem. 5. From the Capture of Jerusalem to the Coming of Christ. 6. From A.D. 1 to the end of the world.

C

sumptum, quem supra posuimus, annus presens existit ab inicio seculi sextus millesimus .cccc<sup>us</sup> xlij<sup>us</sup>. . . .

At this point, in the middle of the chapter, in the Venice edition of 1494 (as well as in that of 1591, which is practically a reprint of the former) the narrative of Vincent de Beauvais is suddenly interrupted with the remark: 'Haec enim Vincentii Historia. Quae vero sequuntur usque in tempus currens, anni, videlicet M.ccccxcliiij. ex cronica nova sunt addita.'

Here, in the edition of 1591, follows a new heading: 'Rerum gestarum | Ex Historiis | Ac Chronicis fide dignis | collectarum, et excerptarum | Quae ab Anno M.cccliiij. usque ad M.ccccxcliiij. seculi digna visa sunt, | ad Speculum Historiale compendiosa appendix.' Then follow ninety-one chapters (unnumbered in the edition of 1494) of the interpolated chronicle. At the end of these is printed a Latin sapphic poem addressed 'Ad deum optimum maximum | de his quae mirabilia gessit pro iustissimo | et excelsa Maximiliano Rege Romanorum.' At the close of the ninety-first chapter is appended this notice: 'Haec habuimus quae ex chronica nova adjiceremus.' Then follows another interpolated chapter (the ninety-second), entitled, 'De morte, ac fine rerum; ' which again is followed by two short Latin poems, one in hexameters, the other in elegiacs, on the same subject. The next chapter (ninety-three) resumes the narrative of Vincent at the commencement of his cap. evi., 'De signis futurae consummationis,' and follows him to the end, the work being concluded in twenty-three chapters (evi.-exxviii.) dealing with the Coming of Antichrist, Hell-fire, the Glorification of Saints, &c.

I have searched in vain through the well-known bibliographies, as well as through the various notices of Vincent de Beauvais, for any account of this interpolation. The only mention of it I have been able to find is in a meagre note by Clement Davy in his 'Bibliothèque Curieuse Historique et Critique'<sup>4</sup> in which he says of the Venice edition of 1494 of the 'Speculum Historiale': 'L'on y a ajouté un petit supplément au "Speculum Historiale" que l'on a continué jusqu'à l'année 1494.' The circumstance of this addition having escaped notice is easily accounted for by the fact that it is not introduced as an *appendix*, but as an *interpolation*; so that the conclusion of the work, being the same in the Venice editions of 1494 and 1591, which contain the supplementary chapters, as in the Strassburg edition of 1473, which does not, presents no clue to the bibliographer. Among other interesting notices which occur in these interpolated chapters is one of Vincent de Beauvais himself, with a list of his works.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Vol. iii. p. 82, note 62.

<sup>5</sup> This seems of sufficient interest to warrant its transcription here. It will be noticed that the *Speculum Morale* is duly included among Vincent's works, though

The biographical account of Dante, referred to at the beginning of this article, runs as follows :<sup>6</sup>

Dantes aligerius<sup>7</sup> patria florentinus vates et poeta conspicuus ac theologorum<sup>8</sup> [sic] precipue tempestate ista claruit. Vir in cives suos egregia nobilitate venerandus: qui licet ex longo exilio damnatus tenues illi fuissent substantie, semper tamen phisicis atque theologicis doctrinis imbutus vacavit studiis. unde cum florentia a factione nigra pulsus fuiss<sup>t</sup> parisienne gymnasium accessit: et cum circa poeticam scientiam eruditissimus esset opus inlytum atque divinum lingua vernacula sub titulo comedie edidit. in quo omnium celestium terrestriumque ac infernorum profunda contemplatus singula queque historice allegorice tropologice ac anagogice descripsit. Aliud quoque de monarchia mundi. Hic cum ex gallicis regressus fuisset friderico arragonensi regi et domino cani grandi scaligero adhesit. Denique mortuo cane principe veronensi et ipse apud ravennam Anno domini MCCCXXI etatis sue quinquagesimo sexto diem obiit.

This notice is chiefly remarkable on account of the very interesting statement, which I believe to occur nowhere else, that Dante attached himself to 'the king Frederick of Aragon'—*friderico arragonensi regi adhesit*. There cannot be the least doubt as to the identity of the person intended. There was no king of Aragon of the name of Frederick, but there was a well-known prince of that name belonging to the royal house of Aragon who was the wearer of a royal crown: namely, Frederick, commonly known as Don Frederick, the third son of Peter III of Aragon, who in 1296 assumed the crown of Sicily, and retained it until his death in 1337. On the death, in 1285, of Peter III, king of Aragon and Sicily, his eldest son, Alphonso, became king of Aragon, while James, the second son, succeeded to the crown of Sicily. When Alphonso died, in 1291, James succeeded him in Aragon, leaving the government of Sicily in the hands of his younger brother Frederick. A few years later, however, at the instigation of Pope Boniface VIII, James, ignoring the claims of his brother, agreed to cede Sicily to the Angevin claimant, Charles II of Naples. The Sicilians, on

it has no claim to rank as such, being largely a compilation from St. Thomas Aquinas and other contemporary writers. 'Vincentius gallus patria burgundus belvacensis historicus et theologus ordinis predicatorum pater, per hoc ipsum tempus claruit. Et innumerabiles historias multis sub voluminibus comprehendit. Quatuor enim specula edidit de omni scibili materia: Doctrinale, Morale, Naturale, et historiale, quod usque ad annum domini M.ccliiij [a mistake for Mccxliij—see Vincent's own account quoted above] produxit. Atque alia multa composuit videlicet Librum gratie, Librum de Sancto Joanne evangelista, Librum de eruditione puerorum regalium, et Consolatorium de morte amici. Et quammaxime de laudibus dive ac gloriose virginis Marie tractatum celeberrimum edidit.'

\* It is placed at the end of Cap. 91 in the edition of 1591, between an account of the death of King John of Bohemia (1346) and a record of the marriage of Azzo VIII of Este to Beatrice, youngest daughter of Charles II of Anjou (1305).

<sup>6</sup> The edition of 1591 reads *Aligerius*.

<sup>7</sup> Some work has evidently dropped out here.

hearing of this agreement, renounced their allegiance to James, and proclaimed his brother Frederick king in his stead, under the title of Frederick II (1296). Charles and James thereupon made war upon the latter, but in 1299 James withdrew his troops, and in 1302, on the failure of a fresh expedition against him under Charles of Valois and Robert, duke of Calabria, Frederick was confirmed in possession of the kingdom of Sicily under the title of king of Trinacria,<sup>9</sup> receiving in marriage at the same time Charles II's third daughter, Eleanor.

A peculiar interest attaches to this statement of the chronicler as to Dante's relations with Frederick of Aragon, owing to the fact that, as every student of Dante knows, the poet never mentions that prince's name, nor refers to him, save with bitter reproach and condemnation,<sup>10</sup> and this, though his reign was most beneficial to the island of Sicily, and he himself appears to have been greatly beloved by his subjects. It is generally supposed that the explanation of Dante's bad opinion of him is to be found in Frederick's policy after the death of the emperor, Henry of Luxemburg, to whom Dante had looked as the saviour of Italy. During the emperor's lifetime Frederick had acted as his ally against his most formidable opponent, Robert of Naples, and had had the command of the combined Genoese and Sicilian fleets. On Henry's death (in 1313) he went to Pisa, and was offered by the Pisans the lordship of their city, in the hope that he would carry on the campaign against king Robert and the Tuscan Guelfs. But Frederick, for whom the offer had no attractions, imposed such hard conditions that they practically amounted to a refusal. Leaving Pisa, he returned to Sicily, and thenceforth, withdrawing as much as possible from Italian affairs, he devoted himself mainly to the consolidation of his own kingdom.<sup>11</sup> It was doubtless this want of sym-

<sup>9</sup> This title was doubtless chosen in order to emphasise the fact that Frederick was king of the island of Sicily only, and had no title to sovereignty over the Two Sicilies, a designation which included the kingdom of Naples as well as that of Sicily proper.

<sup>10</sup> See *Purg.* vii. 119; *Par.* xix. 131, xx. 63. An apparent exception is in the passage (*Purg.* iii. 116) where he is referred to (as some think) as 'l' onor di Cicilia.' But even if the commentators who understand this of Frederick are correct in their interpretation, it does not necessarily involve an inconsistency on Dante's part; for he opinion may be regarded as being rather that of the speaker—namely, Manfred, the prince's grandfather—than that of the poet himself in this case. Manfred would naturally take a more favourable view than Dante of the character of his grandson, who had offered such a stout and successful resistance to the representative of the *hat d* house of Anjou.

<sup>11</sup> 'Federigo re di Cicilia il qual era in mare con suo stuolo . . . aggiuntosi già co' Genovesi, sentendo della morte dello imperadore, venne in Pisa, e non avendo potuto vedere lo imperadore vivo, si il volle vedere morto. I Pisani per dotta de' guelfi di Toscana e del re Roberto si vollono il detto don Federigo fare loro signore; non volle la signoria, ma per sua scusa domandò loro molto larghi patti fuori di misura, con tutto che per gli più si credette che, bene ch' e' Pisani gli avessono fatti, non avrebbe voluto lasciare la stanza di Cicilia per signoreggiare Pisa; e così sanza grande dimoro si tornò in Cicilia.' Villani, ix. 54.

pathy with the fate of Italy which aroused the wrath and indignation of the Florentine poet.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever may have been the nature of Dante's relations with Frederick, it may be pretty safely assumed that they came to an end after the refusal of the latter to identify himself further with the Ghibelline cause in Tuscany.

The anonymous chronicler's laconic statement—*Friderico arragonensi regi adhesit*—opens up all sorts of curious speculations as to Dante's political position in the Ghibelline camp. He certainly regarded himself as a person of political importance: witness the tone of his several letters addressed to the princes and peoples of Italy (*Epist. V.*), to the Florentine Guelfs (*Epist. VI.*), and to the Emperor Henry himself (*Epist. VII.*); and this statement, if it were possible to accept it without question, would go far to prove that he was in direct and personal contact with some of the most exalted members of the imperial party in Italy. Unfortunately, explicit as the statement is, and difficult as it is to see what motive there can have been for its invention, it is impossible to regard it without grave suspicion. Not only is it unsupported by evidence from any other quarter, but we have in the very next sentence an equally explicit statement which is demonstrably false, as it involves a serious blunder in chronology. The chronicler goes on to state that *after Can Grande's death* Dante himself died at Ravenna in 1321. As a matter of fact, Can Grande did not die until eight years after Dante, in 1329, as is correctly recorded in another part of the interpolated chronicle.<sup>13</sup> Under these circumstances the statement as to Dante's relations with Frederick of Aragon, though quite possibly based upon trustworthy information, must be received, if not with scepticism, at any rate with reserve, until it can be substantiated from some independent source.

The only other item of special interest in this somewhat meagre account of Dante is the allusion to his straitened circumstances—‘although,’ says the chronicler, ‘his means were slender owing to his being in exile for such a long period, yet he always found leisure for his favourite studies.’ This remark lends some support to the theory recently propounded by Dr. Scartazzini that Dante earned his liveli-

<sup>12</sup> Dante's earlier denunciations of Frederick in the *Convito* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which were written probably between 1307 and 1310, were doubtless due to the contrast presented to his mind between Sicily as the centre of Italian letters under the Emperor Frederick II and the kingdom distracted as it was by the wars of Frederick of Aragon and his Angevin rival.

<sup>13</sup> Cap. 33 of the additional chapters in the edition of 1591, which contains a notice of Can Grande. We here incidentally get another mention of Dante: ‘*Canis scaliger, qui ex rebus strenue gestis magnus cognomento appellatus est, . . . erat multe eloquentie princeps comesque per humanus, nec non et in omnes liberalis, atque doctorum virorum tum ecclesiasticorum tumque oratorum et historicorum ac poetarum assidua familiaritate conjunctus . Inter quos Dantem florentinum poetam ob eius doctrine prestantiam magnis honoribus prosequi voluit.*’

hood during his exile by teaching. We may suppose the chronicler's meaning to be that in the intervals of the profession by which he was obliged to support himself the poet found means to pursue his favourite philosophical and theological studies. It can hardly have been as a mere student that he went to the universities of Paris and Bologna during his exile. It is much more probable that he visited those places as being the centres of learning, where he would find the two things he most needed—pupils and books. We are told nothing in this account of the love affairs, the military service, and the embassies, of which we hear so much in the various biographies of Dante; but details of this sort could perhaps hardly be expected in such a brief notice. It is singular, however, that so little should be said about the poet's writings, the only other work referred to besides the 'Commedia' being the 'De Monarchia.' This is all the more strange because Villani—whose chronicle, one would think, must have been well known and easily accessible—in his chapter on Dante (ix. 136) gives a complete list of the principal works of his illustrious fellow-citizen together with their titles.<sup>14</sup>

I have not, so far, been fortunate enough to discover the source whence this hitherto unnoticed account of Dante was taken. It has every appearance of being derived from some version quite independent of the half-dozen well-known biographies of the poet, and it is much to be hoped that the original may some day come to light.

In addition to the biographical notice of Dante discussed above, the interpolated chapters in the Venice editions of the 'Speculum Historiale' contain an interesting, and in some respects novel, account of the murder of Henry, son of Richard, earl of Cornwall, king of the Romans, by his cousin, Guy de Montfort, in a church at Viterbo. The deed is usually represented as having been premeditated on the part of Guy;<sup>15</sup> but according to this version Guy committed the murder under a sudden impulse on unexpectedly finding himself in close proximity to the prince. It appears that Guy and his cousin both happened to attend mass in the same church at the same hour, and Guy, who entered the church shortly after the prince, being struck by the noble bearing of the latter, learned who he was, and without compunction stabbed him to death on the spot.

<sup>14</sup> Save in the case of the *Convito*, which he describes as 'uno commento sopra quattordici sue canzoni morali.'

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, the account of the murder in the *Grandes Chroniques de France*: 'Avant que le roy de France venist à Viterbe ne que il fust en la ville entré, Henry le fils au roy d'Alemaigne vint en la cité. Guy de Montfort eut bien sa venue, si se hasta moult de savoir son repaire et où il estoit. En moult grant pensée estoit comment il le pourroit occire.' (*L'istoire au Roy Philippe III.* Chap. xii.)

Venerat ad pontificem Heinricus, adolescens Richardi regis cornubie olim comitis tunc defuncti<sup>16</sup> filius, multa paterni olim regni<sup>17</sup> negotia apud sedem apostolicam tractaturus. Guido montifortis et ipse adolescens cum Philippo rege Francorum eodem se contulit. Forte accidit utrumque ad rem divinam sancti Laurentii<sup>18</sup> ecclesiam, que Viterbii est celebris, eadem hora petere. Sed Guido posterior ingressus conspectu<sup>19</sup> liberali ac regia potius facie adolescentem caterva<sup>20</sup> famulatus stipatum [conspexit].<sup>21</sup> Quodam ex suis indicante Richardi filium esse didicit a quo Symon pater in anglia per dolum fuerat interfactus, nullaque loci tentus reverentia incautum aggressus interfecit. Equitibus inde suis et pariter Philippi regis deducentibus ad ruffum<sup>22</sup> etrurie prefectum incolmis per-  
venit.

I have not succeeded in identifying the 'nova chronica' which is mentioned by the interpolator as the source of his continuation of the 'Speculum Historiale.' Doubtless, as we gather from the remark inserted in the edition of 1591, his information was derived from various quarters. Ptolemy of Lucca ('Ptolemeus lucensis') is quoted as an authority more than once, but it is evident that his chronicle was not systematically made use of, since the account given by him of the murder of 'Henry of Almain' is quite different from the one I have reproduced above.

PAGET TOYNBEE

<sup>16</sup> The chronicler is mistaken in supposing Richard, king of the Romans, to have been dead at the time of the murder. His death did not occur till more than a year after that event.

<sup>17</sup> The edition of 1494 reads *regna*, that of 1591 reads *regia*; the emendation adopted in the text was suggested to me by Mr. Charles Plummer.

<sup>18</sup> This again is a mistake. The real scene of the murder was not the famous church of San Lorenzo, the present cathedral, but that of San Silvestro, which was comparatively little known. (See Pinzi, *Storia di Viterbo*, ii. 288.)

<sup>19</sup> The editions read *conspectum*.

<sup>20</sup> The edition of 1591 reads *catervam*.

<sup>21</sup> I supply *conspexit*, as some such verb is needed to complete the sense.

<sup>22</sup> Conte Rosso degli Aldobrandini, whose daughter Guy had married.

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